

REMARKS

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-41 are currently pending.

II. IDS

An IDS was filed on September 15, 2006. The outstanding Office Action included a copy of the Form PTO-1449 of the Office Action, in which the Examiner "initialed" various of the references, to thereby acknowledge the references.

However, the Examiner did not "initial" references AG, AH and AJ on the Form PTO-1449, and instead lined-through these references. Presumably, the Examiner did not initial these references since English language translations were not provided.

However, it is respectfully submitted that references AG, AH and AJ on the Form PTO-1449 should be "initialed" by the Examiner, since these references were cited in the English translation of the Japanese Office Action provided with the IDS, and also an explanation of the relevance of these references was provided on the attachment 1(e) of the IDS.

In view of the above, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner "initial" references AG, AH and AJ on the Form PTO-1449 of the IDS filed September 15, 2006.

III. NON-COMPLIANT CLAIMS

The outstanding Office Action indicates that the claims as presented in the Response filed September 15, 2006, are non-compliant, since all claims not included in the originally filed patent are not underlined. The Office Action indicates that the claims as presented in the Response filed October 6, 2005, were acceptable.

Therefore, the claims are presented herein with all claims not included in the originally filed patent as being underlined. As a result, the claims are the same as presented in the Response filed October 6, 2005. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the claims as presented herein are acceptable.

IV. Declaration

The outstanding Office Action indicates that the statements of error in the Reissue Declaration are not sufficient, since "the statements of error do not state which independent claim(s) have been added to overcome the error".

However, it is respectfully submitted that it is not required for the statements of error to state which independent claim(s) have been added to overcome the error.

More specifically, MPEP 1414 explicitly states that "The corresponding corrective action which as been taken to correct the original patent need not be identified in the oath/declaration". See MPEP 1414 under the subheading titled "A STATEMENT OF AT LEAST ONE ERROR WHICH IS RELIED UPON TO SUPPORT THE REISSUE APPLICATION (I.E., THE BASIS FOR THE REISSUE)".

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the outstanding Office Action inappropriately requires that the Reissue Declaration indicate which independent claim(s) have been added to overcome the error.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Reissue Declaration fully satisfies the requirements of 37 CFR 1.175 and MPEP 1414, and should be accepted by the PTO.

On January 30, 2007, Attorney Kravetz discussed the above-described portion of MPEP 1414 with Supervisory Examiner Hayes on the telephone. During the telephone discussion, Examiner Hayes stated that there appears to be an internal PTO document requesting that the Reissue Declaration indicate which claims have been added to overcome the error. As the PTO document was an "internal" document, it is not provided to Attorney Kravetz.

It is respectfully submitted that, if the PTO is following such an internal document, the document appears to be in conflict with MPEP 1414. Attorneys and applicants should be required to comply with published PTO rules and procedures, such as those in 37 CFR 1.175 and MPEP 1414, and not with internal PTO procedures that conflict with the published rules and procedures.

Please note that several different Reissue Declarations have been filed in an effort to comply with requirements in previous Office Actions. It should also be noted that the inventors are located in Japan, which makes it more difficult and time consuming to obtain signed Declarations.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the Reissue Declaration filed September 15, 2006, should be acceptable to the USPTO.

V. SUPPORT FOR THE NEW CLAIMS

The Response filed September 15, 2006, included detailed descriptions indicating where support can be found in the specification for each claim.

However, the outstanding Office Action asserts that:

"A discussion of the support in the specification for all functions of all the new claims has not been provided as required by 37 CFR 1.173(c), a discussion of some of the functions has been included in the most current amendment, but not all functions were supported."

This assertion in the Office Action does not refer to specific functions in specific claims. As a result, it is difficult to know precisely what functions are of concern to the Examiner. However, to comply with the requirements in the Office Action, the following description indicates where support can be found for the new claims. The following description expands on the description in the remarks of the Response filed September 15, 2006, of where support can be found.

Generally, support for the new claims is found, for example, in FIGS. 1 and 2, and the disclosure on page 5, line 6, though page 12, line 4, of the specification. However, more detailed support for each new claim is indicated below.

8. An apparatus comprising:

digital information receiving means for receiving digital information provided via a communication medium (see, for example, switchover switch 57 in FIG. 2 and the disclosure on page 7, lines 14-27, of the specification);

drive means for reading digital information from, and writing digital information to, a storage medium (see, for example, modulator device 59 and modulator device 60 in FIG. 2);

software management means for decoding encrypted software data and for managing monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 in FIG. 2);

information converting means for converting digital information received by said digital information receiving means, digital information read by said drive means, and software data decoded by the software management means, into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and elements 66, 67a, 67b, 68a, 68b, 70 and 71 in FIG. 2);

switch means for switching a one-way connection between one of said digital information receiving means and said information converting means, said digital information receiving means and said drive means, said drive means and said information converting means, said digital information receiving means and said software management means, and said drive means and said software management means (see, for example, the combined operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and the combined operation of switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2); and

outputting means, connected to said information converting means, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO

OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

9. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said software management means comprises:

deciphering means (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2) for deciphering digital information received by said digital information receiving means when the digital information is ciphered, and for providing the deciphered digital information to said information converting means for converting (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2), and

for deciphering digital information read by said drive means when the digital information is ciphered, and for providing the deciphered digital information to said information converting means for converting (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2).

10. The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said software management means further comprises:

billing managing means (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2)

for managing billing based on a utilization of the digital information received by said digital information receiving means (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2), and

for managing billing based on a utilization of the digital information read by said drive means (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2).

11. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said information converting means comprises:

extension means (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13)

for extending digital information received by said digital information receiving means when said digital information is compressed (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13); and

for extending said digital information read by said drive means when said digital information is compressed (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13).

12. An apparatus comprising:

a digital information receiver receiving digital information provided via a communication medium (see, for example, switchover switch 57 in FIG. 2 and the disclosure on page 7, lines 14-27, of the specification);

a drive device reading digital information from, and writing information to, a storage medium (see, for example, modulator device 59 and modulator device 60 in FIG. 2);

a software manager decoding encrypted software data and managing monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 in FIG. 2);

a converter converting digital information received by said digital information receiver, digital information read by said drive device, and software data decoded by the software manager, into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and elements 66, 67a, 67b, 68a, 68b, 70 and 71 in FIG. 2);

a switch switching a one-way connection between said digital information receiver and said converter, between said digital information receiver and said drive device, between said drive device and said converter, between said digital information receiver and said software manager, and between said drive device and said software manager (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2); and

an output device, connected to said converter, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

13. The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said software manager comprises:

a deciphering device (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG.

2)

deciphering digital information received by said digital information receiver when the digital information is ciphered, and providing the deciphered digital information to said converter (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2), and

deciphering digital information read by said drive device when the digital information is ciphered, and providing the deciphered digital information to said converter (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2).

14. The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said software manager further comprises:

a billing manager (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2)

managing billing based on a utilization of the digital information received by said digital information receiver (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2), and

managing billing based on a utilization of the digital information read by said drive device (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2).

15. The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said converter comprises:

an extender (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13)

extending digital information received by said digital information receiver when said digital information is compressed (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13), and

extending said digital information read by said drive device when said digital information is compressed (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13).

16. An apparatus comprising:

a communication path providing digital data (see, for example, the output line from communications 51 in FIGS. 1 and 2);

a storage medium storing digital data (see, for example, medium 52 in FIG. 1, and disk 58 and/or CD drive 52 in FIG. 2);

a converter converting digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and elements 66, 67a, 67b, 68a, 68b, 70 and 71 in FIG. 2);

a software manager decoding encrypted software data and managing monetary charges

according to usage of the decoded software data, the decoded software data being provided to the converter as digital data to be converted (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 in FIG. 2);

a switch (see, for example, the various switch positions provided by input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and the combination of switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2) having

a first switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and the connection of output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and see also the combined operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 with the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2)

a second switch position which connects digital data read from the storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and the connection of output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and see also the combined operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 with the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2),

a third switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection so that the digital data provided via the communication path is stored in the storage medium (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57 and 61 in FIG. 2 to provide the data from communication path 51 to disk 58), a fourth switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the software manager so that the software manager decodes encrypted software data in the provided digital data and the converter converts the decoded software data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter being provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 64 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66), and so that the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2), and

a fifth switch position which connects digital data read from the storage medium to the software manager so that the software manager decodes encrypted software data of the read digital data and the converter converts the decoded software data into at least one of visible and audible data, and so that the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from medium 52 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66); and

an output device, connected to the converter, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

17. The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the software manager comprises:
a deciphering device (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2) which,

when the switch is in the first switch position and the digital data provided by the communication path is ciphered, deciphers the digital data before the digital data is provided to the converter, so that the converter receives and converts the deciphered digital data (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2), and,

when the switch is in the second position and the digital data read from the storage medium is ciphered, deciphers the digital data read from the storage medium before the digital data is provided to the converter, so that the converter receives and converts the deciphered digital data (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2).

18. The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the software manager comprises:
a billing manager (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2) managing billing based on a utilization of digital data provided by the communication path, and managing billing based on a utilization of digital data read from the storage medium.

19. The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the converter comprises:
an extender (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13) extending digital data provided by the communication path when the digital data is compressed, and extending digital data read from the storage medium when digital data is compressed.

20. An apparatus comprising:
a communication path providing digital data (see, for example, the output line from communications 51 in FIGS. 1 and 2);
a storage medium storing digital data (see, for example, medium 52 in FIG. 1, and disk 58 and/or CD drive 52 in FIG. 2);
a converter converting digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and elements 66, 67a, 67b, 68a, 68b, 70 and 71 in FIG. 2);
a decoder decoding encrypted digital data (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 in FIG. 2);
a switch (see, for example, the various switch configurations provided by input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2) having

a first switch configuration which, when non-encrypted digital data is provided by the communication path, connects the digital information provided by the communication path to the converter as a one-way connection without passing through the decoder so that the converter converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switcher means 54, and the connection from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and see also the combined operation of switches 57, 61 and 64, and the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65, in FIG. 2),

a second switch configuration which, when encrypted digital data is provided by the communication path, connects the digital information provided by the communication path to the converter and the decoder as a one-way connection so that the encrypted digital data is decoded by the decoder and then the decoded digital data is converted by the converter into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from communications path 51 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter being provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 64 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66),

a third switch configuration which, when non-encrypted digital data is read from the storage medium, connects the digital data read from the storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection without passing through the decoder so that the converter converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2),

a fourth switch configuration which, when encrypted digital data is read from the storage medium, connects the digital data read from the storage medium to the converter and the decoder as a one-way connection so that the encrypted digital data is decoded by the decoder and then the decoded digital data is converted by the converter into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66), and

a fifth switch configuration which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection so that the digital data provided via the communication path is stored in the storage medium (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57 and 61 in FIG. 2 to provide the data from communication path 51 to disk 58);

an output device, connected to the converter, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2); and

a software manager managing monetary charges according to usage of the encrypted digital data decoded by the decoder (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2).

21. A switch (see, for example, the various switch positions provided by input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2) comprising:

a first switch position which connects digital data provided by a communication path to a converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and the connection of output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and see also the combined operation of switches 57, 61 and 64, and the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

a second switch position which connects digital data read from a storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and the connection from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and see also the combined operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 and the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

a third switch position which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection so that the digital data provided via the communication path is stored in the storage medium (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57 and 61 in FIG. 2 to provide the data from communication path 51 to disk 58);

a fourth switch position which connects the digital data read from the storage medium to

a software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the read digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 64 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66), wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2); and

a fifth switch position which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the provided digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter being provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66), wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2);

wherein an output device, connected to the converter, outputs the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

22. An apparatus comprising:

first means for connecting digital data provided by a communication path to a converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switcher means 54, and the connection from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and see also the combined operation of switchers 57, 61 and 64, and the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

second means for connecting digital data read from a storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data read from the storage

medium into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and the connection from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and see also the combined operation of switches 67, 61 and 64, and the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

third means for connecting the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection so that the digital data provided via the communication path is stored in the storage medium (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57 and 61 in FIG. 2 to provide the data from communication path 51 to disk 58);

fourth means for connecting the digital data read from the storage medium to a software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the read digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data, wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66);

fifth means for connecting the digital data provided by the communication path to the software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the provided digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter being provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66),

wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2); and

outputting means, connected to the converter, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

23. An apparatus comprising:

digital information receiving means for receiving digital information provided via a communication medium (see, for example, switchover switch 57 in FIG. 2 and the disclosure on page 7, lines 14-27, of the specification);

drive means for reading digital information from, and writing digital information to, a storage medium (see, for example, device 59 and device 60 in FIG. 2);

information converting means for converting digital information received by said digital information receiving means and digital information read by said drive means into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and elements 66, 67a, 67b, 68a, 68b, 70 and 71 in FIG. 2);

software management means for decoding encrypted software data and for providing the decoded software data to the information converting means to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data, and for managing monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2);

switch means for switching a connection between one of said digital information receiving means and said information converting means, said digital information receiving means and said drive means, said drive means and said information converting means, said digital information receiving means and said software management means, and said drive means and said software management means (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2);

selecting means for selecting one of said digital information received by said digital information receiving means and said digital information read by said drive means and inputting the selected digital information to said information converting means to obtain at least one of visible and audible data based on the selected digital information, which is received from different types of digital information sources (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2); and

outputting means, connected to said information converting means, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

24. An apparatus comprising:

a communication medium providing external digital information in one direction (see, for

example, communications 51 in FIGS. 1 and 2);

digital information receiving means for receiving digital information provided via the communication medium (see, for example, switchover switch 57 in FIG. 2 and the disclosure on page 7, lines 14-27, of the specification);

drive means for reading digital information from, and writing digital information to, a storage medium (see, for example, device 59 and device 60 in FIG. 2);

information converting means for converting digital information into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and elements 66, 67a, 67b, 68a, 68b, 70 and 71 in FIG. 2);

software management means for decoding encrypted software data and providing the decoded software data as digital information to the information converting means, and for managing monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2);

switch means for switching a connection between one of said digital information receiving means and said information converting means so that the information converting means converts the digital information received by the digital information receiving means, said digital information receiving means and said drive means, said drive means and said information converting means so that said information converting means converts the digital information read by the drive means, said digital information receiving means and said software management means so that the software management means decodes software data in the digital information received by the digital information receiving means, and said drive means and said software management means so that the software management means decodes software data in the digital information read by the drive means (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2); and

outputting means, connected to said information converting means, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

25. The apparatus according to claim 24, wherein said software management means comprises:

deciphering means (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2)

for deciphering digital information received by said digital information receiving means when the digital information is ciphered, and for providing the deciphered digital information to said information converting means for converting (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2), and

for deciphering digital information read by said drive means when the digital information is ciphered, and for providing the deciphered digital information to said information converting means for converting (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2).

26. The apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said software management means further comprises:

billing managing means (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2)

for managing billing based on a utilization of the digital information received by said digital information receiving means (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2), and

for managing billing based on a utilization of the digital information read by said drive means (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2).

27. The apparatus according to claim 24, wherein said information converting means comprises:

extension means (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13)

for extending digital information received by said digital information receiving means when said digital information is compressed (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13), and

for extending said digital information read by said drive means when said digital information is compressed (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13).

28. An apparatus comprising:

a communication medium providing external digital information in one direction (see, for example, communications 51 in FIGS. 1 and 2);

a digital information receiver receiving digital information provided via the communication medium (see, for example, switchover switch 57 in FIG. 2 and the disclosure on page 7, lines 14-27, of the specification);

a drive device reading digital information from, and writing information to, a storage medium (See, for example, device 59 and device 60 in FIG. 2);

a software manager decoding encrypted software data, and managing monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2);

a converter converting digital information received by said digital information receiver, digital information read by said drive device, and software data decoded by the software manager, into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and elements 66, 67a, 67b, 68a, 68b, 70 and 71 in FIG. 2);

a switch switching a connection between said digital information receiver and said converter, between said digital information receiver and said software manager, between said drive device and said software manager, between said digital information receiver and said drive device, and between said drive device and said converter (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2); and

an output device, connected to said converter, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

29. The apparatus according to claim 28, wherein said software manager comprises:
a deciphering device (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG.

2)

deciphering digital information received by said digital information receiver when the digital information is ciphered, and providing the deciphered digital information to said converter (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2), and

deciphering digital information read by said drive device when the digital information is ciphered, and providing the deciphered digital information to said converter (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2).

30. The apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said software manager further

comprises:

a billing manager (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2)

managing billing based on a utilization of the digital information received by said digital information receiver (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2), and

managing billing based on a utilization of the digital information read by said drive device (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2).

31. The apparatus according to claim 28, wherein said converter comprises:

an extender (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13)

extending digital information received by said digital information receiver when said digital information is compressed (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13), and

extending said digital information read by said drive device when said digital information is compressed (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13).

32. An apparatus comprising:

a communication path providing external digital data in one direction (see, for example, communications 51 in FIGS. 1 and 2);

a storage medium storing digital data (see, for example, medium 52 in FIG. 1 and disk 58 and drive 52 in FIG. 2);

a software manager decoding encrypted software data and managing monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2);

a converter converting digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and elements 66, 67a, 67b, 68a, 68b, 70 and 71 in FIG. 2);

a switch (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2, and the various switch positions

provided by these devices) having

a first switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the converter, the converter converting the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection of input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 64, and output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2),

a second switch position which connects digital data read from the storage medium to the converter, the converter converting the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2),

a third switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium, the digital data provided via the communication path being stored in the storage medium (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 to connect the data from communication path 51 to medium 52, and the operation of switch 57 and switch 61 in FIG. 2 to connect communications path 51 to disk 58 in FIG. 2),

a fourth switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the software manager so that the software manager decodes encrypted software data in digital data provided by the communication path and provides the decoded software data to the converter so that the converter converts the decoded software data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter being provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66),

wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data, wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2), and

a fifth switch position which connects digital data read from the storage medium to the software manager so that the software manager decodes encrypted software data in digital data read from the storage medium and provides the decoded software data to the converter so that the converter converts the decoded software data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from drive 52 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter being provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66),

wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2); and

an output device, connected to the converter, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

33. The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the software manager comprises:

a deciphering device (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2) which,

when the switch is in the first switch position and the digital data provided by the communication path is ciphered, decipheres the digital data before the digital data is provided to the converter, so that the converter receives and converts the deciphered digital data (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2), and,

when the switch is in the second position and the digital data read from the storage medium is ciphered, decipheres the digital data read from the storage medium before the digital data is provided to the converter, so that the converter receives and converts the deciphered digital data (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2).

34. The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the software manager comprises:

a billing manager (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2) managing billing based on a utilization of digital data provided by the communication path, and managing billing based on a utilization of digital data read from the storage medium.

35. The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the converter comprises:

an extender (see, for example, extension sections 67a, 67b in FIG. 2, and page 16, lines 2-13) extending digital data provided by the communication path when the digital data is compressed, and extending digital data read from the storage medium when digital data is compressed.

36. An apparatus comprising:

a communication path providing external digital data in one direction (see, for example, communications 51 in FIGS. 1 and 2);

a storage medium storing digital data (see, for example, medium 52 in FIG. 1 and disk 58 and drive 52 in FIG. 2);

a converter converting digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and elements 66, 67a, 67b, 68a, 68b, 70 and 71 in FIG. 2);

a decoder decoding encrypted digital data (see, for example, decoding means 7 in FIG. 1, and DES 7 in FIG. 2);

a software manager managing monetary charges according to usage of digital data decoded by the decoder (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2);

a switch (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2, and the various switch configurations provided by these devices) having

a first switch configuration which, when non-encrypted digital data is provided by the communication path, connects the digital information provided by the communication path to the converter without passing through the decoder, the converter converting the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2),

a second switch configuration which, when encrypted digital data is provided by the communication path, connects the digital information provided by the communication path to the converter and the decoder, the encrypted digital data being decoded by the decoder and then the decoded digital data being converted by the converter into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66),

a third switch configuration which, when non-encrypted digital data is read from the storage medium, connects the digital data read from the storage medium to the converter without passing through the decoder, the converter converting the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2),

a fourth switch configuration which, when encrypted digital data is read from the storage medium, connects the digital data read from the storage medium to the converter and the decoder, the encrypted digital data being decoded by the decoder and then the decoded digital data being converted by the converter into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter being provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66), and

a fifth switch configuration which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium, the digital data provided via the communication path being stored in the storage medium (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 to connect the data from communication path 51 to medium 52, and the operation of switch 57 and switch 61 in FIG. 2 to connect communications path 51 to disk 58 in FIG. 2); and

an output device, connected to the converter, outputting the at least one of visible and

audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

37. A switch (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2, and the various switch positions provided by these devices) comprising:

a first switch position which connects external digital data provided by a communication path in one direction to a converter that converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

a second switch position which connects digital data read from a storage medium to the converter, the converter converting the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

a third switch position which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium, the digital data provided via the communication path being stored in the storage medium (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 to connect the data from communication path 51 to medium 52, and the operation of switch 57 and switch 61 in FIG. 2 to connect communications path 51 to disk 58 in FIG. 2);

a fourth switch position which connects digital data read from the storage medium to a software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the read digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data, wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from medium 52 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66); and

a fifth switch position which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the provided digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data, wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66);

wherein an output device, connected to the converter, outputs the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

38. An apparatus comprising:

first means for connecting external digital data provided by a communication path in one direction to a converter that converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

second means for connecting digital data read from a storage medium to the converter, the converter converting the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the direct connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

third means for connecting the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium, the digital data provided via the communication path being stored in the storage medium (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 to connect the data from communication path 51 to medium 52, and the operation of switch 57 and switch 61 in FIG. 2 to connect communications path 51 to disk 58 in FIG. 2);

fourth means for connecting digital data read from the storage medium to a software

manager which decodes encrypted software data in the read digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data, wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from medium 52 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66);

fifth means for connecting the digital data provided by the communication path to the software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the provided digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data, wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66); and

outputting means, connected to the converter, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

39. An apparatus comprising:

a communication medium providing external digital information in one direction (see, for example, communications 51 in FIGS. 1 and 2);

digital information receiving means for receiving digital information provided via the communication medium (see, for example, switch 57 in FIG. 2 and the disclosure on page 7, lines 14-27, of the specification);

drive means for reading digital information from, and writing digital information to, a storage medium (see, for example, device 59 and device 60 in FIG. 2);

software management means for decoding encrypted software data and for managing monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 and monetary charges

table 8 in FIG. 2);

information converting means for converting digital information received by said digital information receiving means, digital information read by said drive means, and software data decoded by said software management means, into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and elements 66, 67a, 67b, 68a, 68b, 70 and 71 in FIG. 2);

switch means for switching a connection between one of said digital information receiving means and said information converting means, said digital information receiving means and said drive means, said digital information receiving means and said software management means, said drive means and said software management means, and said drive means and said information converting means (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2);

selecting means for selecting one of said digital information received by said digital information receiving means and said digital information read by said drive means and inputting the selected digital information to said information converting means to obtain at least one of visible and audible data based on the selected digital information, which is received from different types of digital information sources (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2); and

outputting means, connected to said information converting means, outputting the at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, NTSC OUT from element 68a, AUDIO OUT from element 68b and PC from element 71 in FIG. 2).

40. A switch (see, for example, input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1, and switchover switches 57, 61, 64 and 65 in FIG. 2, and the various switch positions provided by these devices) comprising:

a first switch position which connects digital data provided by a communication path to a converter so that the converter converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

a second switch position which connects digital data read from a storage medium to the converter so that the converter converts the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover

means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

a third switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium so that the digital data provided by the communication path is stored in the storage medium (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 to connect the data from communication path 51 to medium 52, and the operation of switch 57 and switch 61 in FIG. 2 to connect communications path 51 to disk 58 in FIG. 2);

a fourth switch position which connects digital data read from the storage medium to a software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the read digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data, wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from medium 52 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66); and

a fifth switch position which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the provided digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66),

wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2).

41. An apparatus comprising:

means for connecting digital data provided by a communication path to a converter so

that the converter converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

means for connecting digital data read from a storage medium to the converter so that the converter converts the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the connection from input switchover means 53 to output switchover means 54, and from output switchover means 54 to information conversion section 56 in FIG. 1, and the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in combination with the connection from switch 64 to switch 65 in FIG. 2);

means for connecting digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium so that the digital data provided by the communication path is stored in the storage medium (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 to connect the data from communication path 51 to medium 52, and the operation of switch 57 and switch 61 in FIG. 2 to connect communications path 51 to disk 58 in FIG. 2);

means for connecting digital data read from the storage medium to a software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the read digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from medium 52 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from CD drive 52 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66), wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, management means 3 in FIG. 1, and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2); and

means for connecting digital data provided by the communication path to the software manager which decodes encrypted software data in the provided digital data and then provides the decoded software data to the converter to be converted into at least one of visible and audible data (see, for example, the operation of input switchover means 53 and output switchover means 54 in FIG. 1 to provide data from communication path 51 to software management means 55 with the data thereafter be provided to information conversion section 56, and see also the operation of switches 57, 61 and 64 in FIG. 2 to provide data from

communication path 51 to software management section 3, and thereafter the operation of switch 65 to provide the data from software management section 3 to demux 66),

wherein the software manager manages monetary charges according to usage of the decoded software data (see, for example, software management means 55 in FIG. 1 and software management section 3 and monetary charges table 8 in FIG. 2).

Various portions of the application are described above as providing support for various claimed recitations. However, the above description is not intended to be limiting in any way as to where support can be found in the specification for the claimed recitations. Instead, other portions of the specification, in addition to or instead of those portions described above, may provide support for a respective claim recitation.

Moreover, the interpretation of the claims is not intended to be limited by the portions of the application described above. Instead, the claims should be interpreted based on well-known claim interpretation principles.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that appropriate support in the application has been shown for the new claims.

VI. CONCLUSION

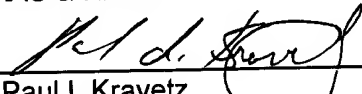
If view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If any further fees are required in connection with the filing of this response, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: February 7, 2007

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